

805 The Dorobo divide the year into two parts, *Muainonik*, the dry season, when they used to go hunting the bigger game with bow and arrow; and *Iuot*, the wet season, when they set traps. Each season covers roughly half the year, the rain beginning to tail off in September and getting less and less till January, and then starting to work up again in March, reaching its peak about May; so that *Muainonik* comprises our months of October to March, and *Iuot*, April to September. The Dorobo have twelve months, all but two having the same names as the Nandi months, but they do not synchronize *:

Dorobo names:	Nandi names:		
<i>Kipiriruo</i>	<i>Kipsundet</i>	October	} <i>Muainonik</i>
<i>Kipsundet</i>	<i>Kipsundet oien</i>	November	
<i>Kipsundet ahe</i>	<i>Mulkul</i>	December	
<i>Mulkul</i>	<i>Ngotidet</i> *	January	
<i>Ngotidet</i> *	<i>Kiptamo</i>	February	
<i>Kiptamo</i>	<i>Iwat kut</i>	March	} <i>Iuot</i>
<i>Iwat kut</i>	<i>Waket</i>	April	
<i>Waket</i>	<i>Ngei</i> *	May	
<i>Mamul</i>	<i>Rop tui</i>	June	
<i>Rop tui</i>	<i>Purel</i>	July	
<i>Purel</i>	<i>Epeso</i>	August	
<i>Yepeset</i>	<i>Mulkul oien</i>	September	

132 The average rainfall at Kapchorua Farm, about two miles below the edge of the forest for the years 1929 to 1937 was 54.09 inches, the maximum being 66.17, the minimum 28.61. Details are given in the Appendix. In the forest itself I think the rainfall is undoubtedly a little higher, perhaps amounting to another 2-3 ins. in the course of an average year.

821 The Dorobo seem to have a better weather sense than the Nandi, and I found that they were generally accurate when making a forecast, whereas the Nandi are usually wrong when they try to foretell the weather. This weather sense is perhaps one of the reasons for their reputation among other tribes as rainmakers; for these Dorobo not only say that they have no rainmakers, but I could find no trace whatever of rainmaking activities, nor any hint that they ever had any. Climatic conditions are such, however, that in a hunting economy rainmaking is not a necessity.

493 The environment of the Dorobo provides them with food, skins, wood, and other vegetable materials. Iron they had not, and they still have no knowledge of ironworking, though they use iron implements. Their activities comprised hunting, trapping, food-gathering, hut-building, the production of honey, and the making of objects of wood, leather, and grass, such as traps, arrow-shafts, bows, honey-barrels, clothing, caps, baskets, and handles for tools. Objects of iron they have got for as far back as they can remember from the Nandi by exchange for such things as they can make or produce themselves.

104 * Throughout this paper I have written the velar nasal by the sign *n*, representing the "long-tailed *n*". In words marked * the first consonant is the velar nasal.

father (if he lives nearby), to his brothers, and lastly, if there is any over, to his clansmen in the settlement; so that a man who gets a pound or so of Nandi tobacco does not keep much of it for himself.

Drink, mainly in the form of honey-wine, is prepared not so much for private consumption as for social gatherings. It is used in various magico-religious performances, and as part of the bride-payment. When a man is visited by a friend or two, he gives them honey-wine; when there is a clan council, honey-wine is drunk; and when men and women meet for a wedding or a naming they drink honey-wine. It is thus an indispensable part of Dorobo social life. When a man wants to relax, he lies down and goes to sleep; but his amusement is composed of social gatherings. Visiting, ceremonials, and clan councils in fact provide him with his entertainment, and conversation and gossip seem to take the place of games and dances. I saw no sign whatever of the game called *kecuik* by the Nandi, which is played with seeds or pebbles in holes in the ground or in a board, and never heard it mentioned. I neither saw nor heard of a dance, and I never once heard a Dorobo of either sex singing.

The principal standard of wealth is really a man's skill as trapper, hunter, and bee-keeper. But the products of this skill are perishable, and formerly the only way in which tangible wealth could be accumulated was in the form of weapons, honey-barrels, and dogs. Now that the old hunting conditions have gone, it is becoming possible for a man to accumulate wealth to a very limited extent in cattle or goats, which he can get by purchase, gift-exchange, or through bride-payment. The use of money has just become familiar, and a certain number of Dorobo earn wages; but except for one or two who have joined the Police, wages are not high, and the average in 1939 was 7 to 10 shillings a month. So far the Dorobo have had little inducement to work for wages, except that by signing on as squatters for a small wage they can acquire a temporary right to live on what was their own land. Beyond the fact that money enables them to buy a little extra food, our idea of wealth means little or nothing to them, and they have not yet advanced far enough into the transitional stage for it to be anything more than a small supplement to their traditional way of living. It is all that they can do to maintain themselves, let alone accumulate reserves or surplus wealth.

The transitional stage which the Dorobo had reached by 1939 is that from hunting to agriculture, with at the same time a strong desire to acquire cattle. It is sometimes suggested that hunting peoples like the Dorobo are really agriculturalists or pastoralists who have had to give up their agricultural or pastoral way of life and take to hunting. This may be true of some, such as the 'false Dorobo' in parts of Kenya who are merely outlaws and fugitives from various tribes. But it is quite clearly not true of the real Dorobo¹, like those who form the subject of this paper, who are unmistakably non-pastoral and non-agricultural. Their basic hunting tendency is shown by their character and behaviour, by their hunting techniques and skill, by

¹ Cf. my remarks in JRAI 59, 1929, p. 378.

- 493 the absence of pastoral and agricultural techniques and vocabulary, by their myths, and in fact by everything about them. To-day it is true that they are becoming agriculturalists, as the following analysis of their economic activities will show:

	Post :	→	Post :	→	Mean :
					(to most common)
Family	Men :	Trapping game in the forest	Cultivation of shambas	Stock	
		Making weapons, honey-barrels, etc.			
		Some : working for wages			
	Women :	Preparing the results of trapping			
		Making baskets, skin clothes, etc.			
		Housework and food collecting			
	Children :	Wooding			
		Herding			
		Housework			
	Men Living Alone :	Trapping	Cultivation of shambas	Stock	
Making things					
Preparing the results of trapping					
Cooking, housework					

- [556] Dorobo life therefore converges on cultivation, with a hunting background, and stock in view as the ultimate achievement. For though the hunting instinct is still very much alive, and though a great deal of time is now spent on cultivation, there is no doubt that the Dorobo (in 1939 at least) had a livestock economy in their minds as the ultimate goal.

2. Economic Activities

a) Bee-keeping

- 262 Honey is to the Dorobo what milk is to the Nandi. It is semi-sacred
 [798] and has a high ritual value, in consequence of which certain rules must be
 [291] observed lest the supply fail. A person must not eat fruit or blood on the same
 264 day that he has eaten honey, though he or she may eat meat. After eating
 honey, bits of the comb must not be left lying on the ground, but must be
 hidden in the undergrowth. Arap Minie said, somewhat unconvincingly, that
 the reason for this was "that other people shall not see them and so be led to
 [789] your honey-barrel". But this is probably not the true reason, which may be
 either simply respect to the honey, from a fear that if treated disrespectfully
 the supply will fail; or else fear of a witch putting a spell on the bees or honey

is to get as much as possible of the crop out of the way so that ploughing can start at once without having to wait till the crop is ripe. But the Dorobo had, all the same, made a step forward, for a solid, compact stook is less likely to be devastated by animals than plants standing scattered over a field. 243
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By 25 November, 1938 the Kipukua people had reaped their crops. The shamba here was about an acre in extent, and was divided into four approximately equal-sized plots. There was little maize, for some had been eaten on the field and some had been destroyed by vermin; what was left had been stooked, and anything like an accurate estimate was impossible, though there might have been two or perhaps three bags in the stooks. If we estimate that the equivalent of two bags might have been eaten, and two more destroyed by vermin, we have about 6 or 7 bags, a somewhat high estimate for a crop grown mixed with eleusine, but not impossible. Of eleusine, one plot yielded 3 bags, and another 2 bags (that is 5 bags from half an acre), not a great deal, certainly, but a fair yield under such conditions, and most useful as food, for the Dorobo eat most of their eleusine, and turn very little of it into beer. Maize and eleusine are ground by crushing on slabs of granite (*lileito*), and the resulting meal is made into gruel (*musarek*) for the children, and stiff porridge (*kiniet*) for the older people; it is generally eaten with a mess of vegetable food (*inguek*) prepared separately. 241
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Storage of crops is not yet a very difficult problem. A few of the Dorobo, it is true, have built granaries of Nandi type, hidden just inside the forest to prevent thefts by the Nandi, for anyone can lift up the roof of such a granary in the night. But since so much of the maize is eaten on the field, what is left at harvest time can be stored in the loft; and the same applies to eleusine, for it does not yield a large amount of grain. I saw no millet growing, and the Dorobo said they bought it from the Nandi. 251
[77]
[439]

As we have already noted, agricultural labour is divided to a certain extent between the sexes, but the distinction is not very sharp, and it was found to work out in the following way: 241
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Men :	Both :	Women :
Heavy preliminary work	Digging	
Planting	Weeding	Collecting and burning weeds
	Reaping	

The heavy work includes lopping off branches in the Nandi manner, clearing bushes, and breaking up the ground when hard. Women may also plant, but the tendency seems to be for men to do it, though there is no absolute rule against women planting. Children help with the weeding, and herd the goats when there are any; old men herd cattle, and women also sometimes herd goats. [857]
[231]

The Dorobo had not by 1939 acquired the Nandi belief that each eleusine crop requires new land, which in the circumstances is just as well; but they do not hesitate to give up using land which is unproductive. Thus, [241]
[77]

* The bag is the standard 2 1/2 lb. gunny bag used in East Africa, holding 200 lbs. of maize.

Both the social and the economic ranges of the Dorobo are very narrow. The family is a self-supporting unit, and a group of families forms a social unit; but the group is isolated, and the groups cohere through their strong clan solidarity and strict exogamy. There is no "tribe" as e.g. the Nandi, but a collection of family or clan groups forming a *koret* or district, and a collection of such groups within a given area having a common organization, customs, and dialect, and the innate idea that "we are the Dorobo of such-and-such a place." Thus the Kapchepkendi Dorobo (with whom this paper deals) distinguish themselves from the Dorobo living on Tindiret hill, though that hill is only some seven miles from Sosoio. (See map of the Dorobo country.) Before the Government dispersed them, the Dorobo possessed, more or less undisturbed, the whole of the forest. Now they have no land at all. But they maintain their solidarity in spite of disruption, by means of their isolation, strong clan-system, and the fact that outsiders, e.g. the Nandi, are half afraid of them (so long as they do not go into Nandi), as being rainmakers and magicians of no mean ability, a people who are, in fact, somewhat uncanny. Their external relations may be described under three heads as (1) acquisitional: exchange of goods and services with the Nandi, and, till about 80 years ago, with the Vasin Gishu Masae; (2) restrictive: the Government raids them for taxes, and takes away their land, which leads to (3) an attitude of deep suspicion towards all Europeans, though they are driven by economic pressure to work for them.

Productive activities are concerned with the following:

A. *Food*: meat (by hunting and trapping), honey, wild plants, eleusine and maize (grown or obtained), milk, maize meal, salt and beer.

B. *Non-edible*: houses, weapons, implements, utensils, clothing and ornaments (except of iron), firewood, traps, honey-barrels, coloured earth (which is dug in the eastern part of the forest and sold to the Nandi for cash.)

C. *Raw Materials*: wood, plants, and skins.

The exchange of their own products for things they do not make is governed by natural resources,

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and by personal ability, and therefore to some extent by their geographical setting. They have no iron ore, no metallurgic knowledge, and so all ironwork is imported from the Nandi. Tobacco which they like, is not grown as yet, and this too must be obtained from the Nandi. There is a regular exchange of honey, skins, and baskets, for arrowheads, knives, tobacco, seeds, pottery, etc., and a scale of exchange values has come into existence:

- 1 arrow head is given for a gourd of honey.
- 1 bundle of tobacco is given for a bag of honey.
- 1 large pot is given for a large bushbuck skin.
- 1 small pot is given for a duiker skin.
- 2 basketfuls of seed for one basket.¹

Sometimes personal services are given, e.g. a day's weeding in the smith's garden for two knives.

Cattle are obtained from the Nandi, to a limited extent, by a system of gift exchange for furs. The Nandi make friends with the Dorobo chiefly for the purpose of getting honey, and the Dorobo will give some to his Nandi friend without expectation of an immediate return. Presently the Nandi gives the Dorobo a goat, and this exchange of gifts paves the way for further and more important transactions: eventually the Dorobo offers his friend a fur cloak for an ox, as e.g. my friend Arap Minij acquired one from a Nandi called Kapkile at Ollesos; he also got another in exchange for 7 goats, which he bought out of his wages for working on a farm.

C. Techniques

1. Hunting

The dry weather, *wasinonik*, is the shooting season, and the wet weather, *ivot*, is the time for trapping. The weapon is the bow and arrow (spears are not used by the Kapchepkendi Dorobo), and the hunters use dogs.

In wet weather buck are caught in traps. In the dry season, wild pig of various kinds² were

¹ A honey-bag is about 12 ins. deep, and 8 ins. wide; it contains about twice as much honey as a gourd. A basket (*kerepet*) is about 6 ins. deep and 6½ ins. wide at the top. [415]

² *Tumda*, the wart-hog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*); and *Toraet*, the giant hog or bush-pig (*Hylchoerus Meinertzhageni*). [136]